

Washington, DC (December 1, 2011) – Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09), Vice Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, recently held a roundtable with veteran-owned businesses in the Tampa Bay area to gather input regarding the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' application process for receiving Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) status.

Bilirakis addressed these concerns at a Veterans Affairs Committee hearing on Wednesday that examined the certification process, which has received criticism for being inefficient and burdensome.

"I'm concerned that the VA is not processing and certifying these veteran-owned businesses adequately. Delays in the certification process are inhibiting these companies and harming much-needed job creation," said Bilirakis, who has reached out to the VA to expedite the process on behalf of local companies.

Bilirakis highlighted the specific case of BCPeabody, a Tampa-based construction company that was verified as a SDVOSB in December 2009 under the former self-verifying process. In 2010, Colonel (Ret.) Bob Carpenter, the company's founder and CEO, applied for SDVOSB re-verification under the new system.

While the re-verification was pending, the company competed for more than 17 months for a VA construction contract in Florida. BCPeabody, a company made up primarily of veterans, won the contract which will provide work for the company for the next 5 years, and was given a deadline of December 6, 2011 to have its SDVOSB status verified by the VA.

Carpenter has yet to receive verification, and while a timely reconsideration review does not guarantee that verification will be granted, a lack of timely reconsideration does guarantee that the pending contract will be lost and several people will lose their jobs.

Watch Bilirakis address the situation at Wednesday's hearing [here](#):